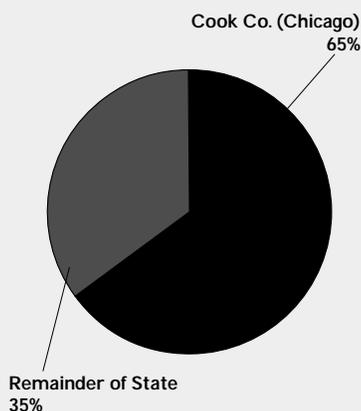


Unfinished Business: Why Cities Matter to Welfare Reform Illinois

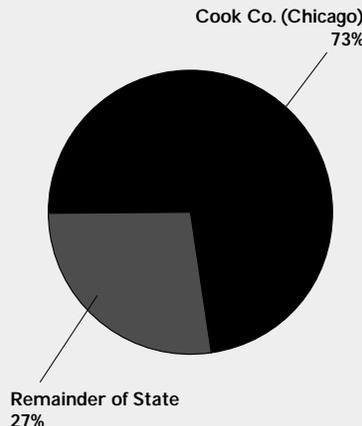
An analysis of welfare caseloads in the 89 urban countiesⁱ that contain the 100 largest citiesⁱⁱ found that:

- In 1999, ten states, including Illinois, accounted for nearly 70 percent of the nation's welfare caseloads, up significantly from 42.5 percent in 1994. The bulk of the national welfare population can be found in: California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington. These ten states contained 53 percent of the overall national population in 1999.
- While urban caseloads are declining rapidly, they are shrinking more slowly than national caseloads. Cook County, Illinois is an exception to this trend. While the nation's welfare caseloads dropped by 51.5 percent between 1994 and 1999, Illinois and Cook County (Chicago) reduced their caseloads even faster, at rates of 58.0 percent and 52.5 percent, respectively. There were 100,065 cases in Illinois and 73,190 cases in Cook County.
- However, Cook County's share of Illinois' families on welfare grew between 1994 and 1999. The county contained 73.1 percent of Illinois' welfare in 1999, up from 64.6 percent in 1994.
- Cook County is shouldering a disproportionate share of Illinois' welfare cases when compared to its share of the total state population. While Cook County contained only 42.8 percent of Illinois' population in 1999, it contained 73.1 percent of the state's welfare caseload, nearly twice (1.7 times) its "fair share."ⁱⁱⁱ
- Racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented on the Cook County welfare rolls, compared to their numbers in the total population. Whites comprised less than 10 percent of the welfare rolls, yet nearly 70 percent of the total county population. Blacks, on the other hand, comprised three-quarters of the county welfare rolls, but only slightly more than a quarter of the county population.^{iv}

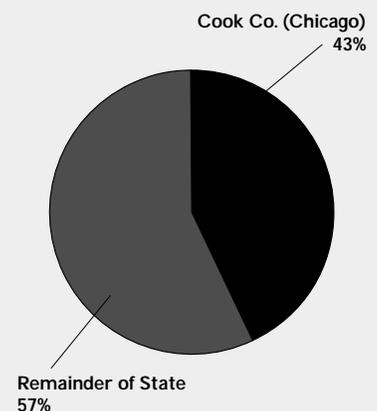
A. Share of Illinois' Welfare Caseload, 1994



B. Share of Illinois' Welfare Caseload, 1999



C. Share of Illinois' Total Population, 1999

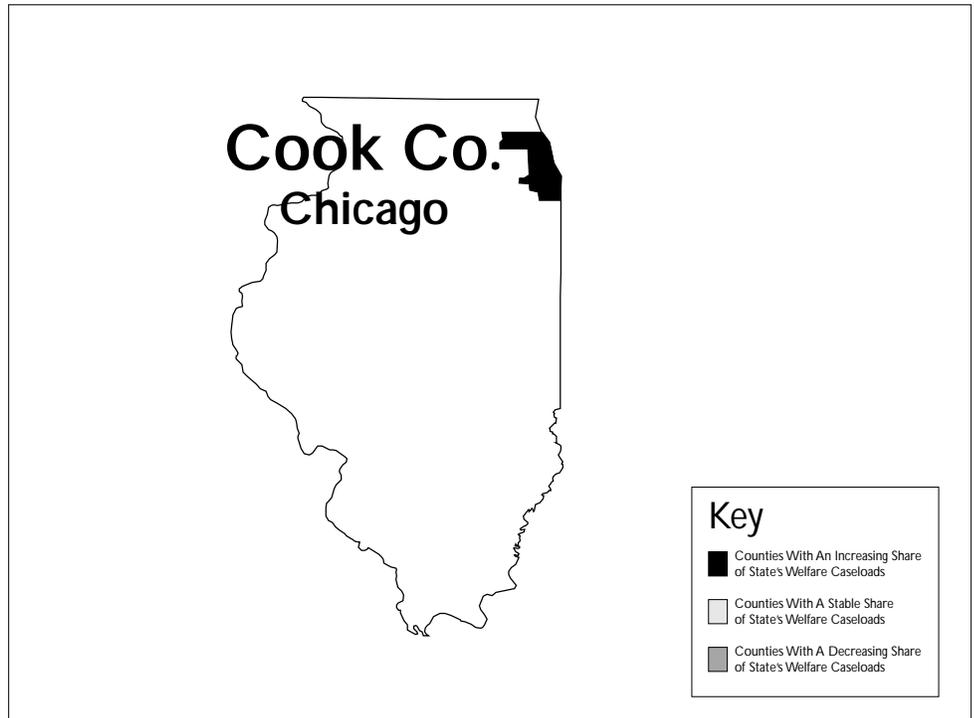




Illinois Data Table

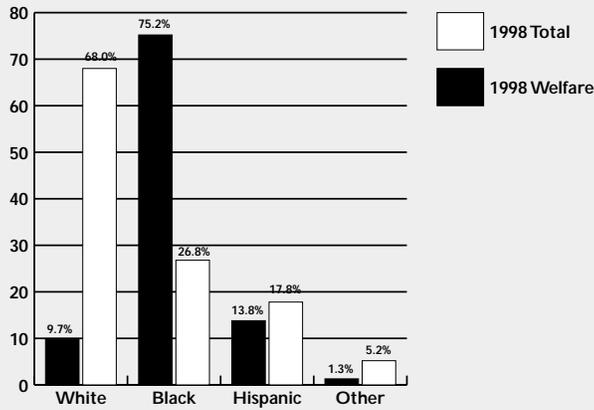
	Welfare Cases 1999	% Decline in Welfare Cases 1994-1999	% of State Caseload 1994	% of State Caseload 1999	% of Total State Population 1999	Fair Share Index 1999	City Concentrated Poverty Rate' 1990	% of County Population in Central City ^{vi} 1998
Illinois	100,065	58.0%						
Cook Co. (Chicago)	73,190	52.5%	64.6%	73.1%	42.8%	1.7	13.7%	54.0%

Right: The map indicates the change in concentration of state welfare case-loads in Cook County between 1994 and 1999. Cook County (Chicago) experienced an increased concentration of Illinois' welfare cases, growing from 64.6 percent to 73.1 percent.





**Cook County Racial and Ethnic Composition:
Total Population vs. Welfare Caseload, 1998**



Endnotes

- i The caseload data reflect the number of welfare cases, not individual recipients. Welfare cases may include a two-parent household with children, a single-parent household with children, or cases where there is no adult in the assistance unit (child-only cases). The data also reflect the number of cases that received cash assistance under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and its successor, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
- ii Because welfare programs, both AFDC and TANF, are typically administered at the county-level, the caseload data reflect the county caseloads, not the number of cases within the central cities. For the most part, the use of county-level caseload data may understate the central city welfare trends because of the inclusion of welfare cases from suburbs.
- iii The Fair Share Index conveys the share of the state welfare population contained in a county, compared with the county's share of the overall state population. The Fair Share Index is a ratio of two figures: the county's percentage of the state welfare caseload in 1999 divided by the county's percentage of the state total population in 1999.
- iv Percentages may not add up to 100 percent since the ethnic category of "Hispanic" may overlap with other racial categories.
- v The concentrated poverty rate reflects the percentage of the city population that lived in census tracts where 40 percent of the residents were poor in 1990 (the most recent year for which concentrated poverty data is available). Concentrated poverty is associated with the social characteristics and behaviors that define the so-called "hard-to-serve" welfare population: illiteracy, chronic unemployment, poor work history, no high school diploma, low skills, teenage pregnancy and out-of-wedlock births.
- vi The percentage of the county population that lives in the central city indicates how "urban" the county and, by extension, the welfare caseload actually is. Counties in the Southwest and West are relatively larger than the Northeastern and Midwestern counties and contain larger suburban populations. We would expect that the welfare population is more urban even in relatively more suburban counties. The indicator serves as a rough estimate of how well the county welfare data captures city-specific welfare trends.

Full Report Available at:
www.brookings.edu/urban

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